

**NEWS – CONGRESSMAN PETE STARK**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**STARK, COLLEAGUES, COMMUNITY GROUPS CALL FOR BUDGET THAT ENSURES MORE CHILDREN DON'T FALL INTO POVERTY**

WASHINGTON- Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA), 37 of his colleagues, and 44 groups today sent a letter to President Obama, OMB Director Lew, and the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Budget Committee, urging support for a budget that protects children from the dangers of poverty.

In the United States, one in five children now live in poverty. As Congress debates responsible ways to cut the deficit, this letter asks those responsible for crafting the new budget to protect programs that lift children out of poverty and commit to efforts to invest in children.

For a PDF of the letter, please visit: <http://go.usa.gov/YYH>

The text of the letter is below.

Mr. President, Director Lew, Chairman Ryan, and Ranking Member Van Hollen:

According to the new Republican majority, the 112th Congress will be focused on cutting the deficit. We know that difficult decisions will have to be made. The National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform indicated broad agreement that serious steps must be taken, but lacked consensus on what those steps should be.

Although there are many opinions about how best to balance the budget, we believe that there is one crucial concept about which all Americans can agree: no matter what steps we take to get our nation's finances in order, our children must be protected from the dangers of poverty. As we seek solutions to our long-term fiscal problems, we must protect programs that lift children out of poverty and redouble our efforts to invest in children. We cannot afford to make any decisions that push more children into poverty.

Growing up in poverty is one of the most damaging circumstances a child can face. Poor children are sicker, do worse in school, enter the foster care system at a higher rate, and have more behavioral and emotional problems. They are also much more likely to live in poverty as adults, become incarcerated, or depend on public assistance.

As a result of the current recession, we have seen an unprecedented decline in child well-being. One in five kids now lives in a food insecure household, a disturbing statistic that jumped from 16% to 21% in the past year. Public schools have seen a 50% increase in the number of homeless students. Children are more likely to be abused or neglected during difficult economic times. These adverse childhood events translate into a long-term human capital deficit in the United States, robbing our country of these children's potential. Child poverty is also expensive, costing the United States an estimated \$500 billion due to lost productivity and increased expenditures in health care and criminal justice.

One in five American children now live in poverty. This should be unacceptable in a country as prosperous as ours. Great Britain has faced similar challenges, but in 1999 they declared a war on child poverty. Ten years later, they have cut their child poverty rate in half by increasing supports for poor families and investing in children. Their progress has continued in spite of the recession and a change in the governing party. Britain's new conservative-led government has pledged to ensure that deficit reduction measures do not result in any increase in child poverty. In fact, they raised spending on tax credits for low-income families to ensure this pledge is met. We should make a similar commitment to children.

We ask you to develop a budget that protects children and focuses on cutting child poverty.

Sincerely,  
Pete Stark  
Raúl Grijalva  
Keith Ellison  
Bob Filner  
Lynn C. Woolsey  
John Lewis  
John Conyers, Jr.  
Judy Chu  
James P. Moran  
Danny K. Davis  
Rosa L. DeLauro  
Gwen S. Moore  
John W. Olver  
Dennis J. Kucinich  
Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.  
Jan Schakowsky  
Michael Honda  
José E. Serrano  
Maxine Waters  
Donna F. Edwards

Barbara Lee  
Lucille Roybal-Allard  
Jackie Speier  
Luis V. Gutiérrez  
Al Green  
Karen Bass  
Anna G. Eshoo  
Mazie Hirono  
Maurice Hinchey  
Linda T. Sánchez  
Edolphus Towns  
Edward J. Markey  
Rush D. Holt  
Shelley Berkley  
Chellie Pingree  
Jim McDermott  
Emanuel Cleaver, II  
David Cicilline

This letter is endorsed by:

American Association of School Administrators  
America's Promise Alliance  
Arizona Community Action Association  
Association of Jewish Family & Children's Agencies  
The Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Boys & Girls Clubs of America  
Center for Law and Social Poverty (CLASP)  
Child Welfare League of America  
Center for Public Policy Priorities (Texas)  
Cities for Progress, Institute for Policy Studies  
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc.  
Colorado Children's Campaign  
Community Action Partnership  
Community Action Partnership of Lake County  
Connecticut Voices for Children  
Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED)  
Every Child Matters  
Family Voices  
First Focus  
Forum for Youth Investment  
Foster Family-based Treatment Association  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
The Jewish Federations of North America  
Michigan's Children  
Mid Michigan Community Action  
MN Community Action Partnership

Missouri Association for Community Action  
National Alliance to End Homelessness  
National Council for Community and Education Partnerships  
National Council of Jewish Women  
The National Center on Family Homelessness  
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health  
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby  
New Hampshire Community Action Association  
Oklahoma Therapeutic Foster Care Association  
Ozark Opportunities, Inc.  
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children  
Public Citizens for Children and Youth  
Public Education Network  
Shriver Center  
St. Andrew Legal Clinic  
Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth  
Union for Reform Judaism  
Voices for Utah Children

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